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THE ADVANCED OPERATIONS SEMINAR

1. The Advanced Operations Seminar Series is designed to provide an opportunity for relatively senior and experienced officers in the Clandestine Services to research, analyze and discuss operations, and or to plan new operations as a result of such research and analysis.

2. It should be noted that the word "Advanced" in the title of the course refers primarily to the experience of the student body and the method of study, rather than the subjects studies. The undersigned has made a wide unofficial canvas of DDP and OTR personnel, and has concluded that clandestine operations are like cooking; there exists mediocre cooking, and good cooking, rather than "advanced" cooking. Stress in any advanced operational instruction should be placed however, on the more unusual types of operations, such as [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Applicants for this course should have as prerequisite to enrollment, at least five years experience in operations, and be at least a GS-12 or above.

3. Background:

The first Advanced Operations Seminar was conducted at Headquarters from 11 - 22 January 1965, on a full-time basis. This seminar was organized and presented in response to the specific requirement of the WH Division, which requested that a course be established for middle grade and senior case officers with emphasis [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Since the course was prepared at the behest of the WH Division, the curriculum and

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schedule were approved by [REDACTED] Chief of Plans,
WH Division, and [REDACTED] C/WH.

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Because of the nature of the course a substantial number of guest speakers were used. Every effort was made to select participants who were not only recognized as authorities in their fields, but who were also known to be good speakers. In contacting the participants, each was requested orally by the Chief Instructor to keep straight lecturing to a bare minimum, utilizing actual case illustrations and encouraging student discussion. In this respect the course should have been called a Symposium rather than a Seminar.

Student Reaction:

The student reaction to the various presentations was most gratifying. Without exception, they took an active part in every discussion, and several of the speakers commented that this was the most responsive group that they had ever dealt with. In my opinion, this was in great part due to the maturity and experience level of the members of the class, which also contributed to the success of the entire seminar.

Students were informed that in effect, this was a "Pilot Course" and that their detailed critiques and comments were very much desired. They were asked to make notes after each lecture, which would be used in the preparation of their final critiques. A statistical summary of portions of the critiques on which answers were required produced the following results:

a. Do you feel that the course achieved its stated objectives:

Yes: 13 No: None

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- b. Do you consider the course to be sufficiently comprehensive?
Yes: 3 Others: In general "yes" but would like treatment
25X1A of the following additional topics: [REDACTED] 7; TSD, 2; Liaison, 1.
- c. Are there any elements of the course you feel could be
eliminated: Four of the students felt that the discussion of
25X1A case study [REDACTED] could have been eliminated (see instructor's
comments). Two felt the casing study unnecessary.
- d. Do you think there was a sufficient balance between discussion
and lecture periods? Yes: 8 Too much lecture: 5
Too much discussion: 0
- e. Would you recommend the course to other Agency employees?
Yes: 13 No: None
- f. Do you think having taken this course will assist you in your
work and therefore in your career: Yes: 13 No: None

4. Conclusions and Recommendations:

We feel that there continues to exist a requirement in the Clandestine Services to afford experienced officers an opportunity to accelerate their experience vicariously by exchange of thoughts and experiences through discussion, and to learn and apply new and unusual techniques. This was also the feeling of WH Division which had requested another running of the last AOS. (Unfortunately, when the second course was to be scheduled, the agitated state of affairs in Latin America precluded the release of senior officers from their desks.) With the desire to fulfill this need in mind, there are presented herewith two alternative techniques for the future presentations of the course:

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a. The first alternative is essentially a condensation of the discourses held in the first running of the AOS, to which has been added a practical exercise, in which the student will be returned to his desk and allowed one week to analyze and prepare an operation from target study to plan for implementation (See Attachment "A"). This method has the following advantages:

- (1) All class members start on an equal footing (i.e. the first week of instruction) regardless of past experience.
- (2) In a given time, it permits of much broader coverage of subject matter. (Although only about 25% of what is heard is retained, the total number of facts and ideas that can be presented in a given time by the discussion method is so much greater than by other methods, that the student may retain an actually greater number of facts, though the percentage be smaller.)
- (3) It permits greater advance control of subjects to be covered.
- (4) Its success is less dependent on the background, eloquence and industriousness of the students.
- (5) It minimizes the chance of security breaches by overzealous students.

The disadvantages of the aforementioned system are:

- (1) Such a course requires considerable skill by the speaker and the Chief Instructor to keep the discussion animated and within the limits of the subject.

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- (2) It is admittedly more difficult to retain what is learned by doing.
- (3) The unmotivated student gets very little from such a course, the excellence of the discussion leaders notwithstanding.
- (4) The outstanding authorities in the various phases of clandestine operations are not necessarily the best speakers.
- (5) Senior personnel in any professions rightly or wrongly, seldom feel that they would have much to learn from listening to their colleagues.

b. The second alternative for accomplishing the mission of this course is to conduct a true seminar, defined in Websters New International Dictionary as "A group of (usually graduate) students engaged in original research, and in exposition of the results by thesis, lecture, etc." (See Attachment "B"). The advantages of such a course would be of considerable significance, as indicated below:

- (1) The student would have the opportunity to engage in guided, useful research on a subject of actual or potential operational interest. (While industry spends tremendous amounts of manpower in research, the operational research effort in this Agency is very limited.)
- (2) Students would retain much more of what they learned by actual performance, rather than passive reception.
- (3) Actual performance of a real task that might prove operationally useful would serve to actively motivate the student.

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- (4) Fewer guest lecturers would be required.
- (5) Students would broaden their background by active discussion of the projects presented by their fellows.
- (6) Students would broaden their knowledge of the research techniques peculiar to the Clandestine Services, and essential in which many senior officers are lacking.

From the academic point of view, the only disadvantage to this method is that while coverage of a given subject is much more thorough, less items can be treated in a given time. Politically, there is the possibility that the DDP might consider such seminars as the prerogative of its various staffs, which have been conducting seminars from time to time. The various Divisions may also consider outside discussion of their operations as a security hazard. (Suggestions for overcoming such resistance are contained in Attachment B, para 5.)

It is requested that the Deputy Director of Training and the Chief Operations School/TR:

- a. Give us their guidance as to the advisability of the concept of Advanced Operations Courses.
- b. Indicate their approval of either or both of the above mentioned forms of presentation.
- c. Recommend further action in order to implement our plans.

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